

**MINUTES of MEETING of ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE held ON A HYBRID BASIS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,
LOCHGILPHEAD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST 2023**

Present: Councillor Robin Currie (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Ian MacQuire
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Luna Martin
Councillor Garret Corner	Councillor Ross Moreland
Councillor Mark Irvine	Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Andrew Kain	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Tommy MacPherson	Councillor Gary Mulvaney

Attending: Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director
Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth
Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held on 1 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4. TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS AND REGENERATION TEAM - LARGE SCALE PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the progress of large-scale, externally funded project work of the Transformational Projects and Regeneration Team and highlighting key issues that may impact on the successful delivery of the projects.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the current progress contained within the submitted report; and
2. agreed to recognise the contribution and to reflect on the role played by third sector groups, taking a local lead in respect of the Animation of Rothesay Castle, which was implemented in collaboration with Bute Island Improvement District and the pop-up

shop in the former Clydesdale Bank, and to note that this success had been driven by Bute Island Alliance Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated July 2023, submitted)

5. LATEST UPDATE ON STAYCATION PROPOSALS

The Committee gave consideration to a report offering a comprehensive update and overview of the activities carried out by the Council in relation to the Staycation Project.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the update provided within the submitted report; and
2. noted that £83,324.64 remained in the Staycation fund and £5,412 in the marketing fund; and that officers would continue to work with partners to respond to challenges and opportunities that arise from visitor pressures.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated 31 August 2023, submitted)

6. LATEST UPDATE ON THE SETTLEMENT PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICER ACTIONS

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the work of the Settlement Project Support Officer since 31 October 2022. The report detailed key findings from community engagement visits across the Repopulation Zones, initiatives introduced by the Settlement Project Support Officer to encourage active relocation, and the proposed actions for the Argyll and Bute Settlement Project going forward.

Decision

The Environment, development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the content of the submitted report and the updates provided;
2. endorsed the work undertaken to date by the Settlement Project as outlined in Table 2 within the submitted report;
3. agreed the proposed Settlement actions going forward as outlined in Table 3 within the submitted report; and
4. noted that a further report regarding progress on actions would be reported to the next meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated August 2023, submitted)

7. NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN REVIEW CONSULTATION

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires that a consultation must take place as part of the review of the National Islands Plan which had been published in 2019. The National Islands Review Online Consultation had been announced by the Scottish Government on 1 August 2023. The Committee gave consideration to a report proposing that a formal response to the consultation from the Council be prepared and submitted by the closing date of 9 October 2023.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the National Islands Plan Review online consultation announced by the Scottish Government on 1 August 2023, with a closing date of 9 October 2023; and
2. given the timeline for the response, agreed that the formal response to the consultation from the Council be prepared and shared with Members of the Argyll Islands Sounding Board for their views and input, with the final response being delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated August 2023, submitted)

8. ARGYLL AND BUTE OFFICER RESPONSE TO THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S VISITOR LEVY (SCOTLAND) BILL CONSULTATION

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an officer response to the Scottish Government's Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill consultation which had a closing date of 15 September 2023.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee approved the officer response to the Scottish Government's Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill consultation for submission by 15 September 2023.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth dated August 2023, submitted)

*** 9. PROVISION OF FLORAL DISPLAYS**

The Committee gave consideration to a report confirming that a financial saving had been made following the decision by the Council in 2021 to a £10,000 savings package in relation to the nursery growing service. The report set out the challenges in delivering spring bedding, largely due to market changes which were not reasonably foreseeable at the time the savings package was developed. The report also set out a range of possible options for dealing with planting beds in future years, including community involvement.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee agreed to pursue a blended model of options for the delivery of planting across Argyll and Bute as follows:

1. agreed to re-open the Arden Craig growing facility to serve the Isle of Bute with annual summer bedding plants noting that the estimated cost associated with this option was £13,500;
2. agreed to continue to purchase annual summer bedding plants for all other areas across Argyll and Bute, noting that this would deliver a recurring revenue saving of £6,000;
3. agreed to progress Option 6 as noted in the report to continue to engage with community groups across the Council area to take over maintenance of floral displays; and
4. agreed to recommend to the Council that as implementation of these measures are estimated to require additional revenue funding of £7,500 within 2023-24 this is funded from the unallocated General Fund and built into the budget outlook estimates for future years.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Ross Moreland, seconded by Councillor Peter Wallace, tabled)

10. STREET LIGHTING COLUMN REPLACEMENT

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the LED street lighting replacement programme which was nearing completion and capital improvement works to replace columns and cabling prioritised based on condition.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted)

11. FOOTWAY RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing detail of the proposed Footway Reconstruction Programme for 2023/24. A budget of £750,000 had been allocated as part of the 2023 budget process and the report advised of how this had been allocated across the four administrative areas based on the percentage of footways in each area.

Decisions

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. endorsed the proposed programme of capital works for 2023/24; and

2. agreed that details of each Area Committee's programme would be forwarded on to individual Elected Members.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated July 2023, submitted)
Councillor Tommy MacPherson left the meeting at this point.

12. PLAY PARK FUNDING - UPDATE REPORT NO.2

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a further update to the Play Park Report considered by the Committee in March 2023. The report highlighted the excellent responses to the play park adult and young people engagement in regards to the funding award of £938k awarded by Scottish Government for play park renewal to Argyll and Bute Council until 2025/26. The report proposed that following analysis of engagement feedback Area Committees would be provided with a summary, specifically what local communities had identified as their priorities for play park users.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the engagement numbers of 1054 adults and 408 young people responses and that the officer managing this project would review each one over the coming weeks;
2. agreed that once the consultation results had been fully reviewed, a report would go to each Area Committee to agree the priorities for each play park in their area and allocation of funding, within the area allocation (based on the number of play parks) would be allocated to individual play parks; and
3. agreed the amended timeline as set out in section 4.4 of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted)

13. UPDATE ON BUDGET INVESTMENTS

The Council, at the Budget Meeting in February 2023, allocated funding for new vehicles to support service delivery across Roads and Infrastructure Services. The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on progress.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the updates provided within the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted)

14. WASTE - PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (POPS)

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the worldwide concerns surrounding the release of POPs into the environment.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. agreed to call upon the Scottish Government to introduce a grace period following the publication of its new guidance on handling POPs rather than requiring immediate implementation;
2. formally requested that the Scottish Government provides full funding for Argyll and Bute Council (whether directly or by seeking this from the UK Government) given the particular challenges and burdens that fall upon this authority given its remote, rural and island geography;
3. noted that the potential cost for Argyll and Bute Council could reach £0.5m in revenue and capital costs which, given the current pressured financial context, presents real affordability risks;
4. agreed that the Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environmental Services write to the Minister with responsibility for Circular Economy to convey the views of the Committee;
5. requested that a further report was brought to the November meeting of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee to update on any legislation changes, associated costs and the Scottish Government's response to the Committee's formal request.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted; and Motion by Councillor Robin Currie, seconded by Councillor Gary Mulvaney, tabled)

15. WINTER SERVICE POLICY 2023/24

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Winter Service Policy 2023/24 which remained in a similar format and covered a similar network to the Policy approved by the Committee in previous years.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. approved the 2023/24 Winter Service Policy Document at Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
2. approved the Salt Use Reduction and Preservation of Stocks Protocol at Appendix 2 to the submitted report;
3. noted Appendices 3 – 6 of the submitted report; and
4. noted that a review of the financial position was being carried out and this would be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in October.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted)

16. REST AND BE THANKFUL UPDATE

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on the Scottish Government's recent announcement on the long term solution for the Rest and Be Thankful.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated June 2023, submitted)

17. WASTE PPP UPDATE

In December 2022, the Committee agreed to pursue a derogation from the Scottish Government, from the implementation date of the Biodegradable Municipal Waste ban of 1 January 2026 to the end of the Council's Waste PPP contract in September 2026. The Committee gave consideration to a report providing an update on a meeting held with the Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity on 26 July 2023 and a subsequent meeting between Council officers and Scottish Government Officials.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee –

1. noted the content of the submitted report;
2. noted the update from the Minister and Scottish Government Officials;
3. noted the advice to engage proactively with SEPA; and
4. requested that an update be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on discussions with SEPA and Zero Waste Scotland.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services dated August 2023, submitted)

18. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 - ALLOTMENTS WAITING LIST REGISTER

A report providing an update on the actions that are being undertaken in response to duties placed on the Council under Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the Allotments Waiting List Register update which reflected the duties placed on local authorities arising from Part 9– Allotments of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support dated August 2023, submitted)

19. ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee work plan was before the Committee for noting.

Decision

The Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee noted the content of the work plan.

(Reference: Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee work plan as at August 2023, submitted)